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"Rent-a-Mouth" Turner Is Wrong—Again

Editorial:

Retired Admiral Stansfield Turner headed the Central Intelligence Agency during the years when, it is the opinion of many insiders and this magazine, morale and productivity were at their lowest. Now he says we must do away with "The Pentagon's Intelligence Mess," as he titled an opinion piece which *The Washington Post* printed on January 12th. He wants to strengthen the Defense Intelligence Agency by eliminating the Service intelligence agencies. He said they were sabotaging American military intelligence—by parochialism, and because their expertise is so persuasive, he leads us to believe inferentially, that DIA is "a pushover" for the individual Services.

Turner is an expert on sabotage of this sort. Look what he did to the CIA. This is the man who left us damned-near naked in Iran. This is also the man, we can now report, who, shortly after Jimmy Carter was voted out of office, went out of his way to dine one night with columnist Jack Anderson. That night, Turner tried unsuccessfully to plant a "survey" he said he had done of CIA personnel which, Turner claimed, showed that morale in the Agency was higher than in many years. It was, obviously, Turner's ploy to persuade the Reagan Administration to keep him in office. (Anderson himself called *AFJ* later one evening and personally confirmed Turner's not very subtly proposed leak. Anderson had learned that *AFJ* knew of the dinner meeting and was apparently worried that *AFJ* might print the story while Turner was still in office. That made us wonder why Jack Anderson was so worried: Would a story about that dinner shut off a vital source of his information?)

So much for Turner's intellectual and political acumen: A plug from Jack Anderson was going to sway Ronald Reagan's decision on who would run the CIA? Little wonder that a senior member of Carter's inner circle said of Turner, after one of his White House briefings, "That man is a mental pygmy."



Vint Lawrence

(For real insight into Turner's mentality, one needs to read his 1985 memoir, *Secrecy and Democracy*. On page one, he told us the book "is not a memoir or a chronicle of my stewardship as the Director of Central Intelligence." On page three, he wrote, "This book, then, is about my experiences from 1977 to 1981." On page 11, he actually complained about having been promoted to four-star admiral in 1975: "Although I was given the fourth star of full admiral, I was 'sent away' to Naples"—as if being made Commander-in-Chief of NATO's Southern Flank [the "front line" of naval command, most officers would agree] were a demotion because it took him away from what he considered "the influential areas of the military."

Thus, Stansfield Turner wrote his own epitaph

as the only naval officer in American history who complained publicly about being promoted to four-star admiral.)

Since retiring, Turner has been earning part of his living as a network TV commentator. Our former Director of Central Intelligence is now in the "rent-a-mouth" business. But he's wrong in mouthing off about DIA—not 100% wrong, just way off base.

Turner's idea of "intelligence" for the Iranian rescue mission in 1980 was to inundate Delta Force with reams of material—little (if any) of it annotated to highlight its relevance to the unit's pending rescue mission, etc. The Army finally had to insert its own agents to find out what Delta Force needed to know about the American Embassy in Tehran, while Turner was frantically recruiting back to service many of the clandestine operators he had summarily retired or fired.

The Defense Intelligence Agency today is a recognized expert in critical military intelligence issues, working in full partnership with the CIA and the military Services. DIA's contributions range from lead responsibilities for certain national intelligence estimates, to vital innovations in the field of strategic indications and warning, to time-sensitive operational support to the commanders-in-chief of the unified and specified commands. Its work has become the subject of high praise from the highest levels of the Executive and Legislative branches of government as well as from William Casey, the current Director of Central Intelligence. DIA works day in and day out in close cooperation with the Service intelligence chiefs. *Teamwork*, not *rivalry*, is the basis of this effort. DIA is good—and getting better. That is also testimony to the input it gets from the Service intelligence agencies which Turner would have us eliminate.

Turner's tenure at CIA showed the world how important it is to have experts instead of amateurs working the problem.

Benjamin F. Schemmer